

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 3, with the following rewritten paragraph:

It has now been discovered that functionalized polyolefins that are characterized by having a broad molecular weight distribution are more effective in improving the mechanical strength properties, creep resistance, and water absorption resistance of natural fiber-filled polyolefin composites than are more conventional functionalized polyolefins that have narrower molecular ~~weigh~~ weight distributions.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 22, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Table 5 provides additional proof that the functionalized coupling agents of the present invention are less susceptible to interference from lubricants than are previously known coupling agents. Adding either a fatty acid ester or a blend of fatty acid esters and amides to formulations containing [[to]] such previously known coupling agents resulted in a significant reduction in mechanical properties (see Comparative Examples 22-24). When a functionalized polyolefin coupling agent of the present invention was combined with the same two lubricants, reductions in mechanical properties were much smaller (see Examples 25-28).